

N. 305-22(B)
October 19, 1939. C155838

Memorandum re Public Information Office

At the request of the Prime Minister, a letter was addressed, on October the 13th, to all Ministers in charge of departments informing them of the establishment of the Public Information Office and requesting that, through departmental officers specifically assigned to this duty, the Public Information Office should be regularly advised of all activities relating to the war.

The response to this request has not been entirely satisfactory. To date, seven departments have named officials to cooperate with Mr. Hambleton. The departments reporting are: Trade and Commerce, National Revenue, Mines and Resources, National Defence, Transport Labour and Fisheries.

Only one official named (Mr. Bethune of Mines and Resources) has, however, furnished material other than that coming through in the way of press releases and the like.

The reason for the failure to respond to the request may be partly due to an impression that the departmental officers designated for the purpose of cooperation, are acting as newspaper reporters and are expected to furnish the Information Office only with material which can be made public, and that such material should be in the form ready for release to press. Actually, all information regarding departmental activities should be reported whether confidential or otherwise. If not to be made public, this fact could be indicated, but material should not be withheld on that account. In fact, if the Prime Minister's purposes are to be served, the confidential material may be of more value than the other.

The situation may, perhaps, be met if the Ministers will make it clear to their departments and agencies over which they have supervision that the following is required:

W.E.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939
(M.G. 26, J 4, volume 230, pages C155731-C156122)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA

